THE

Witness.

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FOR THE WITNESS.

THE DANGER OF REJECTING CHRIST.

HOW deplorable is the moral condition of the world! On whatever portion of it we cast our eyes, the inexpressible sufferings which are experienced convince us of the fatal consequences of sin. How astonishing, then, that the *only* remedy should be so generally rejected! Jesus testifies that he came not to condemn the world, but to save it. But how was he received, and how is he still treated! He came to his own, and his own received him not. Why? "I am come (says he) in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." If he had made his appearance in the character of a *political* Saviour, as they vainly expected, probably they would have attended to him. Hence he interrogates, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" It was impossible, therefore, that the Jews who rejected the Messiah should receive any spiritual benefit from his atonement; for Jesus declared unto them, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins—and where I am thither ye cannot come."

But how is he still treated? Has modern infidelity less turpitude than that of the primitive Jews? and are the instances of a fatal rejection of Christ less numerous than formerly? Surely not. How shall *we* escape, if we neglect

so great salvation? Judgment *began* at the house of God; but the end must be dreadful with all those who obey not the gospel.

In pursuing the subject, it is intended to introduce some instances of the judgments which have been threatened, and have been visited upon nations and individuals, for rejecting the Messiah. To begin with the Jewish nation:—

When Pilate washed his hands and declared himself innocent of the blood of Jesus, the Jews replied, "His blood be on us, and on our children." How far and in what manner this imprecation has been fulfilled, will in some measure appear from the history of some of the false Christs, which were foretold by our Saviour, Matt. xxiv. 5. and in the passage quoted above, "If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." Among the great number of these impostors, it is said there have been no less than twenty-four of considerable note. The first of which we have an authentic account was one Caziba, who set himself up about the year of our Lord 119. He chose a forerunner, raised an army, was anointed king, and proclaimed himself Messiah and prince of the Jewish nation. But the Romans sent an army against him; and after a short but dreadful conflict he was killed, and four or five thousands of the Jews perished with him.

In the reign of Theodosius the younger, in the year 434, arose another impostor, called Moses Cretensis. He promised the Jews who dwelt in Crete to divide the sea and give them a safe passage through it. The delusion was so great, that they neglected every concern and followed this impostor to the top of a rock, from whence men, women and children threw themselves headlong down into the sea without the least hesitation or reluctance, until so great a number of them were drowned as opened the eyes of the rest.

In the year 1157, a false Messiah arose in Spain, who occasioned the destruction of almost all the Jews in that kingdom.—In almost every country where the Jews have been numerous, these impositions have been successfully practised against them; and the property and lives which have been lost in defence of these false Christs are incalculable.

The year 1666 was a year of great expectation, and some wonderful thing was looked for by many. This was a fit time for an impostor to set up; and, accordingly, lying

reports were carried about. It was said, that great multitudes marched from unknown parts to the remote deserts of Arabia, and they were supposed to be the ten tribes of Israel, who have been dispersed for many ages; that a ship was arrived in the north part of Scotland with sails and cordage of silk; that the mariners spake nothing but Hebrew; that on the sails was this motto, *The twelve Tribes of Israel.* Thus were credulous men possessed at that time.

Then it was that Sabatai Sevi appeared at Smyrna, and professed himself to be the Messias. He promised the Jews deliverance and a prosperous kingdom. This which he promised they firmly believed. The Jews now attended to no business, discoursed of nothing but their return, and believed Sabatai to be the Messias as firmly as we Christians believe any article of faith. A right reverend person, then in Turkey, meeting with a Jew of his acquaintance at Aleppo, he asked him what he thought of Sabatai. The Jew replied, that he believed him to be the Messias; and that he was so far of that belief, that if he should prove an impostor he would then turn Christian. It is fit we should be particular in this relation, because the history is so very surprising and remarkable; and we have the account of it from those who were then in Turkey.

Sabatai Sevi was the son of Mordecai Sevi, a mean Jew of Smyrna. Sabatai was very bookish, and arrived to great skill in the Hebrew learning. He was the author of a new doctrine, and for it was expelled the city. He went thence to Salonichi, of old called Thessalonica, where he married a very handsome woman, and was divorced from her. Then he travelled into the Morea; then to Tripoli, Gaza, and Jerusalem. By the way he picked up a third wife. At Jerusalem he began to reform the Jews' constitutions, and abolish one of their solemn fasts; and communicated his designs of professing himself the Messias to one Nathan. He was pleased with it, and set up for his Elias, or forerunner; and took upon him to abolish all the Jewish fasts, as not beseeming, when the bridegroom was now come. Nathan prophesies that the Messias should appear before the Grand Seignior in less than two years, and take from him his crown, and lead him in chains.

At Gaza, Sabatai preached repentance, together with a faith in himself, so effectually, that the people gave them-

selves up to their devotions and alms. The noise of this Messias began to fill all places. Sabatai now resolves for Smyrna, and then for Constantinople. Nathan writes to him from Damascus, and thus he begins his letter:—"To the king, our king, lord of lords, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, who redeems our captivity, the man elevated to the height of all sublimity, the Messias of the God of Jacob, the true Messias, the celestial Lion, Sabatai Sevi."

And now, throughout Turkey the Jews were in great expectation of glorious times. They now were devout and penitent, that they might not obstruct the good which they hoped for. Some fasted so long, that they were famished to death; others buried themselves in the earth till their limbs grew stiff; some would endure melting wax dropped on their flesh; some rolled in snow; others, in a cold season, would put themselves into cold water; and many whipped themselves. Business was laid aside; superfluities of household utensils were sold; the poor were provided for by immense contributions. Sabatai comes to Smyrna, where he was adored by the people, though the Chacham contradicted him, for which he was removed from his office. There he in writing styles himself the only and first-born Son of God, the Messias, the Saviour of Israel. And though he met with some opposition, yet he prevailed there at last to that degree, that some of his followers prophesied, and fell into stranger ecstasies: four hundred men and women prophesied of his growing kingdom; and young infants, who could hardly speak, would plainly pronounce Sabatai, Messias, and Son of God. The people were for a time possessed, and voices heard from their bowels: some fell into trances, foamed at the mouth, recounted their future prosperity, their visions of the Lion of Judah, and the triumphs of Sabatai. All which, says the relater, were certainly true, being effects of diabolical delusions, as the Jews themselves have since confessed.

Now the impostor swells and assumes. Whereas the Jews, in their synagogues, were wont to pray for the Grand Seignior, he orders those prayers to be forborne for the future, thinking it an indecent thing to pray for him who was shortly to be his captive; and, instead of praying for the Turkish emperor, he appoints prayers for himself. He also elected princes to govern the Jews in their march to-

wards the Holy Land, and to minister justice to them when they should be possessed of it. These princes were men well known in the city of Smyrna, at that time. The people were now pressing to see some miracle, to confirm their faith, and to convince the Gentiles. Here the impostor was puzzled, though any juggling trick would have served their turn. But the credulous people supplied this defect. When Sabatai was before the Cadi (or justice of peace,) some affirmed they saw a pillar of fire between him and the Cadi; and after some had affirmed it, others were ready to swear it, and did swear it also; and this was presently believed by the Jews of that city. He that did not now believe him to be the Messias was to be shunned as an excommunicated person.

(To be continued.)

THE JEW.

The instant we arose from the table, as before observed, there crossed the court-yard of the inn, opposite to the room where we were sitting, a Jew (as he appeared to be) with a basket of pens. My friend seeing him, hastily ran to the door to inquire of him, whether he knew a man of the name of Abraham Levi, one of their people. 'Yes, (he said) I know him very well; but he is not one of my people.' 'How is that, (replied my friend) are not you a Jew?' 'No, (the poor man said) I thank the Lord I am not. I was once, indeed; but, I trust, I am now a lover of the Lord Jesus.' The effect wrought upon my mind by this short conversation was like that of electricity. 'Pray, my friend, do us the favour (continued my companion) to walk into this room. We are both lovers and humble followers, like yourself, if you are so, of the Lord Jesus; and we shall much rejoice, if you will communicate to us the pleasing information how this change was wrought.' 'That I will most readily, (replied the man,) for if it will afford you pleasure to hear, much more will it delight me to relate, a change, to which I owe such unspeakable mercies.

'It is about two years since, that I first began to feel my mind much exercised with considerations on the deplorable

state of our people. I discovered, from reading the scriptures, the ancient love of God to our nation. In our history, as a people, I saw the many wonderful and distinguishing mercies with which, from age to age, the Lord had blessed us. I remarked also, how the Lord, for the disobedience and ingratitude of our people, had punished us. But what struck me most forcibly, was that prophecy of scripture, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until the Shiloh should come. Gen. xlix. 10. Whereas I saw very plainly, that our nation was without a sceptre, without government, without temple. I remarked moreover, that our people were a light, and vain, and worldly-minded people, who took it not to heart. And if the Lord had punished our fathers for their sins, ours deserved his displeasure more. Added to all these considerations, which very powerfully operated upon my mind, I saw a great mass of people living around me who professed themselves to be followers of the true God; and who asserted, in confirmation of their faith, that the Shiloh was come, and to him was the gathering of the people. Distressed and perplexed in my mind, by reason of these various considerations, I knew not what to do, and could hardly find power or inclination to prosecute my daily labour.

'It happened one day, while walking over the bridge of the city, that, my mind being more than usually affected, I could not refrain from pouring out my heart in prayer to God. I paused, as I stood on the bridge, and lifting my eyes towards heaven, I cried out, O God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who hast declared thyself as keeping covenant mercy for thousands; look down upon me, a poor Jew, vouchsafe to teach me what I must do. Thou knowest my desire is to serve thee, if I knew the way. Thou art justly displeased with our nation and with our people; for we have broken thy commandments. But, O Lord, direct me.

'It was with words somewhat like these (continued the poor man) that I prayed, in which I wept much. At length I walked on, and passing by a place of worship, where I saw many assembled, I found my heart inclined to go in. Who knows, I thought with myself, but the Lord may have directed me hither? I went in, and near

the door finding a seat unoccupied, I entered into it and sat down. The minister was discoursing on the mercies of God, in sending his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If this Saviour was my Saviour, I thought, how happy should I be! I felt myself considerably affected, and frequently turned my face to the wall and wept. And many times, during the continuance of the service, so much was my heart interested by what I heard, that I wept aloud, and could not refrain.

'I had disturbed some of the congregation, it appeared, by my behaviour; so that, as soon as the service was finished, two or three of the men came towards me with much anger, asking me what I meant by coming there to interrupt their worship with my drunkenness. But when they discovered the real state of the case, and I had told them the whole desires of my mind, they almost devoured me with kindness. This served very much also, under God, to convince me, that their religion must be the true religion, which produced such effects.

'Not to fatigue you with my relation, it will be sufficient to observe, that from that hour my mind began to discover hope. And as the kind people, into whose congregation I had thus entered, undertook to instruct me in the principles of the Christian faith, I soon learnt, under God, the fulfilment of the Jewish scriptures in the Christian. And now I find cause, every day, more and more, to bless the Lord for what he hath done for my soul.

'One little event more (he added) I will, if you please, relate, which happened soon after my going into this church. My business of selling my pens obliged me to go to another city, about twelve miles distant from the one where I dwelt; and calling at a pastry cook's shop, who occasionally dealt with me, a circumstance occurred which became highly serviceable to me in my new path of life. There sat in the shop a venerable gentleman, dressed in black; the mistress of the house stood behind the counter, and I was just within the door. A poor beggar, looking miserably ill, came in for a tart. 'Ah! John, (cried the old gentleman) what, you have left the infirmary! Is your disorder declared to be incurable?' 'Yes, sir, (replied the poor man) they say they can do nothing more for me.' 'Well, John, (answered the old gentleman) there is one Physician more which

I would have you try: and he never fails to cure. And he doth it also "without money and without price."' The poor man's countenance seemed to brighten at this; and he said, 'Who is he?' 'It is the Lord Jesus Christ, (said the gentleman) pray go to him John: and if he be pleased to heal your body, it will be a blessed recovery for you indeed; and if not, he can and will heal your soul.' The poor man did not relish the advice; for he went away looking angrily. As for me, I cried out, (for I could not refrain) May the Lord bless you, sir, for what you have said in your recommendations of my Master and Saviour! He is indeed all you have described him, for he hath cured both my body and soul. Astonished at what I said, he expressed his surprise in observing, 'I thought you were a Jew!' 'I was, sir, (I answered) once; but by grace I am now a Christian.' He caught me by the hand, and entreated me to go with him to his house, where I related to him, as I have to you, the means under God of my conversion. And when I had finished my story, at his request, we dropped on our knees in prayer. And oh! Sirs, the fervour and earnestness with which he prayed, and the thanksgivings which he expressed for the Lord's mercy to my soul, never shall I forget. The recollection, even at this distance, continues to warm my heart.'

When the poor man had finished his narrative, my friend and I looked at each other, then at him, and then upward. One sentiment, I am persuaded, pervaded both hearts; and this was the language, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!"

My companion offered him money, at which he seemed hurt. 'I am sorry (said he) that you should think so unfavourably of me.' 'Well, but (answered my friend) we have detained you from your employment, and it is but just; as you have so highly contributed to our pleasure, we ought not to make it detrimental to your interest.' 'I should be very sorry, (replied the poor man) if my diligence would not make up for those occasional interruptions, which are so sweet and refreshing to my own heart, while giving satisfaction to others. No, sir, I thank you for your intentions; but I cannot accept your offer. Besides, I need it not; I have enough and to spare. God supplies all my

wants, and enables me sometimes to help the wants of others.'

The poor man took his leave, after mutual wishes and prayers for our spiritual welfare. And the night being now advanced, after reading the scriptures and prayer, we departed each to his chamber.

Hawker's Zion's Pilgrim.

FOR THE WITNESS.

TO PHILOLOGUS.

My dear brother,

Not only is the important duty of "Christian exhortation" neglected in the churches and among brethren, as you have justly remarked; but it appears to me that almost every other ordinance of the gospel is either neglected or perverted. It is my aim in this letter to notice some of the *causes* of this perversion.

A principal one is, the importance which men have been taught to attach to the *profession* of religion. Among the numberless deceptions practised on the credulity of mankind, perhaps no one has been more successful in extending the bounds of the visible church beyond the limits prescribed by its great Founder, than the numerous *systems** framed for that purpose by the ingenuity and sophistry of interested men. The natural man of inventive capacity cannot long endure the simplicity of the Bible. He sickens at the dull monotony of unadorned truth, and sets about compiling a religious system better suited to his taste and his views. From this thirst for novelty, innovation, and popular applause, have arisen the sectaries which have distracted and divided the church in all ages. The better to accomplish their purposes, these human founders of churches have taken care to incorporate into their systems of faith

* It is far from my intention to exclude *system* in considering divine truth. God himself acts upon a perfect system: and his revelation to man, though not made in a systematic form, contains perfect rules, which it is our duty to learn and adopt. The evil which I devoutly pray to guard against, is, the adopting of any human system, however good, as the rule of my faith or conduct. The sayings and opinions of good men I highly esteem, but can never receive them as *guides*.

too much of the Bible to hazard their rejection, and too little to occasion offence to the man of *rational* piety. They are sure, therefore, of followers, who eagerly adopt this new code as a better guide in ecclesiastical affairs than that ponderous, *mysterious* book, the Bible, which but few have leisure or patience thoroughly to examine, or capacity to understand. What pity that so many whom the Son hath made free should suffer themselves to be duped by such methods! We should have left it to the Papists, to keep men from the Bible, instead of leading them to it. While *they* retained the power, they prohibited the common use of the scriptures, for this reason undoubtedly, because they present truth in a form so simple and lovely, that if men were permitted to read for themselves, their veneration for the priests and their abominable superstitions would probably be transferred from them to the truth itself. And how are we to account for it, my brother, that some of the first reformers should so far imitate them as to require subscriptions and impose acts of uniformity, after professing, in opposition to popery, to adopt the word of God "AS THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE?" And how cruelly have the few faithful witnesses and independent spirits been treated, who could never be brought to submit their consciences to the guidance of men! Where the dominant sect, whether Catholic or Protestant, could call the civil arm to their aid, destruction in its most terrific forms was sure to pursue these daring *heretics!*

I do not write to offend; but should I be so unfortunate as to give just cause for offence, I will most cheerfully retract whatever may hereafter appear to me either unjust or unnecessary. But while any stumbling-block of popish origin remains in the King's highway, it is equally your duty and mine, and the privilege of every Christian in whose way it is cast, to attempt its removal.

I will presume to ask, then, who gave the civil power jurisdiction in ecclesiastical affairs? By what law of the divine Head of the church, are towns and parishes authorized to prosecute and imprison a man for refusing to pay towards the support of a minister whom that man never heard, and if he had, perhaps could not in good conscience hear? I hazard nothing by saying, let men but believe the gospel, and they will require no constraint to support

the servants of Christ who dispense it to them. Let towns and parishes elect and support *their* ministers; but let them not meddle with the church of the living God, whose external government is purely congregational, and stands aloof from all intermixture with human systems and national laws. But it is a fact, too palpable to refute, that we have had, and perhaps now have men among us, ambitious of extending the profession of religion by compulsion. In their zeal for the cause, they have laboured incessantly for uniformity, and have recently hinted to us the establishment of "an ecclesiastical tribunal."

It is well known to you when and how Christianity became corrupted. When the gospel was first published, it was universally rejected by carnal men: but when, notwithstanding all opposition, it prevailed throughout the vast Roman empire, and wicked men could no longer successfully oppose, they offered terms of accommodation; and by degrees diminished the objections of the church to an alliance, which was eventually effected on conditions disgraceful to her honour and fatal to her purity. The church, on her part, qualified or abolished her most obnoxious distinctions; new-modelled her peculiar doctrines; admitted several new-coined words into her vocabulary; adopted some popular substitutes, such as, a reformation of manners for—born of God; a good heart, for faith in Jesus, &c.; and as a finishing stroke to the purity of the faith, lowered down her requisitions so as to receive men of mere *negative* qualifications into her number, and the sons of men (after having learned divinity in the schools) into holy orders. Pleased with their conquest, these irreligious patrons of Christianity, who could never stoop to worship God in a factory or a field, built superb churches, which they dedicated to some of the saints, and *hired* many learned and popular preachers, on whom they conferred pompous titles, and to whom they committed the keeping of their own and their children's souls. In addition to all this, they *established* religion by *law*, by which they took into their *fatherly* protection every member of the community; annexing heavy penalties to the disobedience of their sacred dogmas. Thus did Antichrist commence his hated reign. It was not until the congregational became a national establishment, that popes, prelates, clergymen and doctors be-

came a distinct order from the brotherhood in Christ. It was not until the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people, became incorporated with the world, (which the apostle John says lieth in the wicked one,) that men were obliged to attest their loyalty to government by profaning the institutions of the gospel. No wonder such a popular religion should grow more and more corrupt.

And since the time that the churches, which were originally a congregation of saints, were rendered parochial, electing and supporting their ministers according to human provisions, the primitive discipline of God's house has been comparatively but seldom exercised. How many churches are there at the present day who never assemble at all to transact business; but are under the absolute government (if a government it may be termed) of a single and perhaps unconverted individual. It appears to me that such bodies cannot, in a gospel sense, be called churches. For a gospel church is to be known only by the purity of its doctrines, discipline and members. One unconverted man will disturb the peace of a church while they keep the ordinances as they were delivered to them. But if there should be one real saint in a church of the former description, he must have left his first love, or he could not endure to see his Master's table profaned with unhallowed hands.

The fathers of New-England, from mistaken notions probably, laid the foundation for worldly churches in this country; and not a few of their most respectable descendants approve their sayings. For a full view of their church polity, I refer you to the celebrated *Cambridge Platform*, which has been recently revived. There you will find much to approve, and some things to condemn. Many of their quotations from scripture appear to me altogether inapposite; and seem rather, by their number and arrangement, to frighten the simple reader into compliance, than to induce and assist in an examination. For a confirmation of this, let any one, in the least acquainted with the difference between the governments of the Jewish nation and the church of Christ, look at the passages which they quote in support of the interference of the civil magistrate in religious affairs, in chap. xvii. sec. 8, 9. I have no disposition, however, to quarrel with the manes of the pious fathers and acknowledged founders, nor with the present

pastors, of some of the New-England churches. It is suitable, however, that while we labour to promote the truth as it is in Jesus with *meekness*, we also earnestly *contend* when occasion requires.

It is wonderful how error has maintained its existence by imitation. The church of Rome took their model from the Pagans, the church of England in degree symbolize with her; and not a few of the younger sisters are so much attached to an aged parent, that they seem not inclined at present altogether to discard her. But while Pagans and Papists make their religion to consist in a mere external reverence of their gods and their priests, is it not to be deeply lamented that so many Protestants have been taught to take shelter in an empty profession? And what is the material difference? Will it be more tolerable in the day of Jesus Christ for the credible and even zealous professor, whose heart has never felt the power of truth, than for the Pagan? Yet such is the zeal for extending the *profession* of religion, that Papists and Protestants have exhausted even invention itself to bring every man, woman and child into the visible church!

These are some of the *many* causes which have operated to fill the churches with unconverted men: and it is impossible in the nature of things that it should be otherwise.

Churches thus constituted and governed experience but few changes; while those who, like the church of Ephesus, cannot bear them that are evil, are afflicted with divisions and painful separations. Men who know but little of religion will naturally enough judge most favourably of the former; but they are under a great mistake. *That* peace and external prosperity of which so many boast, are no decisive evidence of the enjoyment of the peace which Jesus bequeathed his redeemed inheritance. This peace is never truly enjoyed but where *discipline* is duly administered in the body, and the *all things* which he has revealed and commanded, implicitly believed, and honestly obeyed. Love is the bond of union among the faithful; and the *knowledge* of Jesus Christ and him crucified, the only foundation of their hope, and the life-giving, operative principle of all their actions. Without these prerequisites, our profession is vain; and our pretended tranquillity must be one day exchanged for terror and amazement, when the saints shall

return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him who serveth God, and him who serveth him not.

QUARTUS.

FOR THE WITNESS.

SYMBOLICAL AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

No. IV.

FIGURES were often derived from the ordinary occupations of life. From the work of the husbandman, in all its parts, such as ploughing, sowing, reaping, threshing, the vintage, wine-press, &c. "Ye have ploughed wickedness; ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies." Hosea x. 13. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." Hosea x. 12. "Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great." Joel iii. 13.

The time of the vintage was a time of great joy. It was generally performed with songs, shouting, and rejoicing; and hence, to cause the vintage shouting and rejoicing to cease, denoted distress, desolation, and misery, &c. "And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field. And in the vineyards there shall be no singing; neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease." Isa. xvi. 10. See also Jer. xlviii. 33.

The prophets often borrow images from threshing, which was performed in various ways, according to the nature and qualities of the grain. See Isa. xxviii. 27, 28. It was generally done on a hill or rising ground, where the chaff was most easily blown away, while the grain remained. This was used as an emblem of the separation of the wicked from the righteous, and the destruction of the one and the salvation of the other. "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and thy hoofs brass." Mic. iv. 13. See also Isa. xli. 15, 16.

They also borrow images from the implements and occupation of a shepherd. Kings and princes were called shepherds, and the people over whom they ruled sheep,

from the similarity between the care of a shepherd over his sheep, and that which a king ought to exercise towards his subjects. Thus David says, "I have sinned, I have done wickedly; but these *sheep*," meaning the people, "what have they done?" 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. The Jewish priests were also called shepherds, as it was their business to teach the people the law of the Lord. "Wo to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" Ezek. xxxiv. 2. In allusion to the care, &c. of a shepherd over his flock, the Lord is called the shepherd of his people. "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock." Psalm lxxx. 1. And David, in the twentieth psalm, has many beautiful and striking allusions to the office and implements of a shepherd, when speaking of his enjoyments and protection from the Lord. In reference also to the same employment, Jesus is styled the good and the chief shepherd; John x. 11. 1 Pet. v. 4.

Metaphors are used also, which are derived from the occupations of the potter, the fuller, the architect, &c. &c. See Jer. xviii. 1. Mal. iii. 2. Isa. xxviii. 16. &c.

The prophets sometimes derived images from the common customs of the people, &c. It was common in seasons of grief to rend the garment, shave the head, and retire to the house-top, which in the east were flat, and filled up with small rooms for devotion. It was also common to sing funeral lamentations, often accompanied with music. "Then Job arose and rent his mantle and shaved his head." Job i. 20. In allusion to this custom it is said, "Rend your hearts, and not your garments." Joel ii. 13. See also Jer. xlviii. 36—38. Isa. xv. 2, 3.

It was the barbarous custom of conquerors, in ancient times, to drive their captives before them naked, exposed to the intense heat of the sun and inclemencies of the weather. As water-mills were not then invented, they generally employed them in grinding at the mills, which were driven by the hands. The posture in which they wrought, was sitting on the ground. In allusion to these things, captivity and degradation are often affectingly described. "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground; take the mill-stones and grind meal, &c." Isa. xlvii. 1—3.

SHAPHAN.

(To be continued.)

FOR THE WITNESS.

ON CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.

How few, alas, can honestly adopt the language of the great apostle, "I am crucified to the world." How few seem sufficiently to regard the sacred injunction, "Be ye not conformed to this world." The sinful compliances of Christians not only betray great ignorance of the gospel, but are calculated to bring reproach on religion, and establish the unbeliever in his rejection of the truth. On a subject so important to the cause of Christ, a few free remarks, I hope will not be deemed unseasonable.

With those who *only* profess religion, not having known its power, I shall not presume to meddle. They are of the world as much as other unregenerate persons; and they love the world, and are loved by it. But are there not some who have been transformed by the renewing of their minds, who are chargeable with culpable conformity to the world in its maxims and amusements? Let all such attend seriously to the following declarations of an apostle; "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory—even our faith." Again; "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" Look into our congregations on the Lord's day; and do we find the people of God distinguished by their early, constant and devout attendance, and by the simplicity of their manners and dress? Alas! is not the contrary too evident? Were Jesus again to visit these abodes of mortality, would he not find that a great number of those who profess to forsake all and follow him, regardless of his injunctions, are following the *fashions* of the world? Ministers of Jesus! are *you*, in all instances, excluded from just censure? Are others sufficiently instructed by your examples and ministrations to lay apart all superfluity, and to adorn themselves in modest apparel, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but with good works, as becometh those professing godliness? If any should reply, "these things are trifles; matters of indifference;" let such be undeceived before it be too late. The hackneyed and favourite term, *things indifferent*, is not of Bible extraction; by the book of God the sentiment is most explicitly condemned. The term is a catch-word of

the grand deceiver, eminently calculated to entrap the unwary in his net. Let the Bible be consulted more than the looking-glass, and the closet substituted for the dressing-room, and Christians of both sexes will cease to consider superfluity innocent, or any of the commands and examples of Jesus indifferent.

The figures Paul employs to describe the church, namely, the *body* of Christ, the *temple* of God, should convince us that it is both sinful and unnatural to bestow the time and expense which is usually wasted in decorating our corruptible bodies. What! shall we disfigure the body of Jesus with trinkets? Shall we defile the temple of God with idols? And where is there a greater idol than dress? By adorning our bodies beyond necessity and convenience, we not only idolize ourselves, but seem to claim an attention from beholders not suited to our real character. Decency, indeed, ought to be regarded as a duty; yet, (to adopt the appropriate language of an elegant poet and fervent Christian,),

" ——— A heavenly mind
" May be indifferent to her house of clay,
" And slight the hovel as beneath her care:
" But how a body so fantastic, trim
" And quaint in its deportment and attire,
" Can lodge a heavenly mind—admits a doubt."

However the people of God may attempt excuses for compliance with general customs in dress, amusements, &c. I pray them to consider how easily they may, at last, by this means, lose sight of all distinction between believers and unbelievers. These words of Jesus should sink deep into our hearts, "Ye are the *salt* of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?—Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." "Every *idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." O how many idle words, lost moments, and even wasted estates are the unavoidable consequences of conformity to the world! It will avail us nothing to plead that our *hearts* may be right, therefore we may take some liberties in what is generally called harmless customs and innocent amusements; for folly will be folly still; and sin can never become less odious in

the sight of God for being committed by his children. Moreover, the Christian has no scriptural evidence that his *heart is right with God*, but what is plainly discovered *by his external obedience to the divine precepts*. "Either make the tree good and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt: *for the tree is known by its fruit.*"

I cannot, consistently with my views of the subject, dispense with a word or two respecting *mourning dresses*. I do not know where this ridiculous and pernicious fashion originated; but it ought to be sufficient to every Christian that it did not originate in the religion of Jesus, but is totally repugnant to the simplicity of the gospel. If cloathing a family in black had any necessary connexion with death and eternity, it could not be objected to. But, to say nothing of the *hypocrisy* which it frequently cherishes, one would think the custom ought to be rejected, when it is seen to what a degree it tyrannises over the tenderest feelings of the heart. See the distressed family thronged with officious advisers and assistants from the hour in which their best, perhaps their only earthly friend has closed his eyes in death, until the weeping survivors are summoned to attend the customary condolence of their sympathizing pastor! Who, alas! but those who are too easily led by popular usage would yield to the cruel, the unnatural sacrifice?

If the simple manners of the saints had not long since been corrupted by superstitious customs, there would have been no need of these remarks. But how surprising it is that practices should prevail among Christians, which but few, and perhaps none pretend fully to justify. The fear of singularity has conduced to this departure; and the same cowardly principle continues to corrupt the church of God. Christians! are you saved by the death of Jesus, and are you not yet redeemed from your vain conversation? For the honour of your divine Master, for the comfort of your own souls, nobly dare to be singular in every thing that is lovely and of good report; and you will thereby induce even your enemies to exclaim, "These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." ERASTUS.

FOR THE WITNESS.

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

Gen. v. 3. *And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, and called his name Seth.*

THIS verse, so far as I know, has always been considered as describing Seth, begotten of Adam in his own likeness as a sinful creature. Though Seth, and all the descendants of Adam, are in his likeness as sinners, (as the scriptures and universal experience prove,) yet I doubt if this is the truth the Holy Spirit teaches in this text. As it can serve no good end to misunderstand any part of the oracles of God, I shall state my objection to the above interpretation, and propose for consideration, what at present appears to me to be the meaning of the Holy Ghost in the passage.

If this text means, that Adam begat Seth in his own likeness as a sinner, why was not this said concerning Cain and Abel, who were surely begotten as much in his likeness as Seth. According to the common view of this passage, it would seem to be intimated, that though Seth was begotten a sinner in the likeness of his father, that he was rather an exception from the rest of Adam's children, and that Adam had begotten his former children, not in his likeness as a sinner, as he had done Seth. We have abundant evidence that Abel was a believer. Gen. iv. 1—8. Heb. xi. 4. 1 John iii. 12. It is generally admitted, and I think might be proved, that Seth was also a believer. It is manifest from the above texts, that Cain, on the contrary, was not only an unbeliever, but also inhumanly wicked in his conduct. Considering, therefore, the character of Cain, with more propriety it might have been said of him, than either of Abel or Seth, that Adam begat him in his own likeness as a sinner. At any rate, it seems inexplicable to me, how Seth should be marked out as begotten of Adam in his own likeness as a sinner, from the rest of his children; and especially that this should be recorded of him rather than of Cain, who was of the wicked one, and slew his brother.

When it is, therefore, said, that Adam "begat a son in his own likeness, and called his name Seth;" I am disposed to think this rather informs us, that Seth was in the

likeness of his father Adam in faith and holiness, than in his likeness as a sinner. I am led to consider this to be the meaning of the passage from the following circumstances. This declaration concerning Seth was not made at his birth, or during his nonage, nor on account of any wickedness which appeared in his future life. At his birth, instead of this it is said, "God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." Gen. iv. 25. This seems to have been spoken by the spirit of inspiration, as a prediction concerning him. It was not uncommon in these days, for parents to utter predictions concerning their children. Thus when Noah was born, his father Lamech says concerning him, "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." Gen. v. 29. When it is said, therefore, Gen. iv. 25. "God hath appointed me another *seed* instead of Abel," it seems not merely to be intimated that Seth was a child given instead of Abel, but contains a prediction concerning him, that he should be a believer like Abel whom Cain slew. "The children of the promise are counted for the seed." Rom. ix. 8.

At the birth of Seth, as far as we are informed, our first parents had no believing child, and consequently had none to transmit the knowledge of salvation to posterity, which in those days was done not by writing, but by tradition. The death of Abel was a double affliction to his parents; it removed not only a beloved child, but it also threatened extinction to the seed of the righteous. To have another seed, therefore, like Abel, was not only the blessing of a child given, but it also revived their languishing hopes, that a seed should serve the Lord, and tell to posterity that the Seed of the woman, should in the fulness of time bruise the head of the serpent. Such an event must have afforded them unspeakable joy. Had Seth been only *another seed* as a *sinful creature*, he would have been rather an extension of the curse, than a medium of transmitting the blessing; and his parents might have justly anticipated additional misery to the world by his birth, so far from having joy upon that occasion.

What leads me to conclude this to be the meaning of the text before us, is the occasion or time when this declaration concerning Seth was made. As has been already

noticed, it was not at his birth, during his nonage, nor on account of any sin committed in his future life. This declaration is made when the inspired penman is about to give a genealogical account of persons between Adam and Noah. In this account is not merely given a list of persons in the line of natural descent, but of those who in those days were believers, and of whom Christ was to be made according to the flesh. Adam stands at the head, and from him the genealogy is traced through Seth, Enos, Cainan, &c. to Noah, including ten generations. See Gen. v. When it is said that Adam begat a son in his own likeness, and immediately follows the genealogy of those who believed the promise of the Messiah, I am inclined to conclude that this was said of Seth being in the likeness of his father, as to faith and holiness, rather than as a sinful creature. Through the line of Seth the genealogy of believers is traced; by him the knowledge of the Saviour was to be conveyed to posterity; and to inform us, that this passed in a direct line from Adam to Seth, it is said, Adam begat a son in his own likeness.

This view of the passage seems to be confirmed from what is said, Gen. iv. 26. "And to Seth was born a son, and he called his name Enos. Then began men to call on the name of the Lord." The phrase *to call on the name of the Lord,* is an expression frequently used in scripture for the exercise of believers; for "how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" Rom. x. 14. Some translate the phrase, and it is so translated in the margin of some Bibles, *to call themselves by the name of the Lord.* This probably is explained, Gen. vi. 2. where believers are called *sons of God,* to distinguish them from unbelievers. It appears to be intimated, that Seth and Enos were believers, and they, with other believers, were distinguished from the world by their attachment to the Lord.

I am aware, that to this view of the passage, several objections may be made. Such as have occurred to me, I shall notice, and attempt to obviate. It may be objected, that if we admit this view of the text, it will follow that Adam begat Seth a believer; which would introduce the doctrine of being born of blood, and of the will of the flesh, which is contrary to scripture. This objection I think is fully removed, when it is remembered, that this declara-

tion was not made concerning Seth, until he was come to years, and had given evidence that he was like his father Adam in faith and obedience. The meaning of the text is not that Adam begat Seth a believer, but that he begat a son, who, when come to years, was like his father, a believer. When this declaration concerning Seth was made, Adam was a believer; and at that time Seth was in this likeness of his father, renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created them.

It may be urged further, that if this declaration is made, intimating that Seth was like his father in faith and obedience, why was it not said so of Abel, who was like Adam in this respect before Seth? This objection I think removed, when it is considered that the genealogy was not to be traced through the line of Abel, but through that of Seth. At the time this declaration was made concerning Seth, Abel was dead; and as it appears that through Seth, and not through Abel, God intended to convey the knowledge of salvation to posterity, it was proper that this should be said of Seth, and not of Abel. If Seth had not been a person in the likeness of his father as a believer, the genealogy could not have been traced in a direct line among the faithful from Adam to Noah. This declaration is made concerning Seth, seemingly to shew that it was so.

It may also be objected by some, that in order to establish this interpretation, it ought to be proved that Adam himself was a believer. It would extend this paper beyond proper length for the Witness, to adduce all the proof which could be brought, to shew that there is reason to conclude that both our first parents were believers. This I may probably do, if time permit, in a future number of your useful publication. It is generally admitted that they were; and if the above interpretation of this text be just, considerable additional evidence is obtained to establish the important fact.

If I had not exceeded the proper limits of a criticism in this paper already, the observations made, if scriptural, would afford ground for some useful reflections. I would only notice, that our first parents appear to have had their minds much exercised about having a godly offspring, and the transmission of the knowledge of the Messiah through those who believed in him, to posterity. It was the only way

in which the truth could be conveyed to others without corruption in those days; and as they had transmitted to their children sin and misery, they were also anxious that they should be the partakers with them of the blessings of salvation. It is also evident, that in those days as well as in these, there was a marked distinction between believers and unbelievers. The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent can never be united. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. We may also learn, that the lists of hard names given in the brief history of those times, is not a table of family pedigree, to gratify our curiosity, but the genealogy of those who had faith in the promised Saviour. "To him gave all the prophets witness." "Search the scriptures, for they testify of him." Acts x. 43. John v. 39.

SETH.

ANSWER TO THREE QUERIES.

1. SINCE on the present constitution of things, men never had a disposition to love and serve God, nor can it be produced by any circumstances in which they can be placed; how can they be accountable for what they never had, and without divine influence never can have?

2. If it be said, that man is accountable from his powers and constitution, and therefore that God requires of him perfect obedience and love as the result of his possessing a moral nature; still how is it consistent with the goodness of God, to produce accountable beings in circumstances wherein their rebellion is certain, and then punish them for it?

3. If the reply to these difficulties be founded on the principle, that from what we see, we cannot conceive of a constitution which hath not either equal or greater difficulties in it; is it not a confession, that we cannot meet the objections and answer them in the direct way, but are obliged to acknowledge that the government of God is too imperfectly understood by us, to know the principles on which it proceeds?

The above queries are not the effect of any unbelief of the great leading doctrines of the gospel; but as every

thinking man has his own way of settling such moral difficulties, you will confer a favour on me if you will state how you meet and answer them in your own mind. K.

ANSWER.

If the querist imagines that we profess to have embraced a system which answers all difficulties, he should be reminded that we profess no such thing. If it answer all *sober* and *modest* objections, that is as much as ought to be expected. The querist would do well to consider whether he be not off Christian ground; and whether he might not as well inquire as follows:—How it could consist with the goodness of God, knowing as he did the part that men and angels would act, to create them? Or if he had brought them into being, yet when they had transgressed, why did he not blot them out of existence? Or if they who had sinned must needs exist, and be punished, yet why was it not confined to them? Why must the human race be brought into being under such circumstances?

I remember, when a boy of about ten years old, I was bathing with a number of other boys near a mill-dam, and the hat of one of my companions falling into the stream, I had the hardihood, without being able to swim, to attempt to recover it. I went so deep that the waters began to run into my mouth, and to heave my feet from the ground. At that instant the millers seeing my danger, set up a loud cry, "Get back! get back! get back!" I did so, and that was all.—What the millers said to me, modesty, sobriety, and right reason, say to all such objectors as the above:—'Get back! get back! get back! You are beyond your depth! It is enough for you to know that God *hath* created men and angels, and this notwithstanding he knew what would be the result; that he *hath not* blotted them out of existence; and that he *hath not* prevented the propagation of the human race in their fallen state. These being *facts* which cannot be disputed, you ought to take it for granted, whether you can understand it or not, that they are consistent with righteousness: for the contrary is no other than *replying against God.*'

Whatever objections may be alleged against an hypothesis, or the meaning of a text of scripture, on the ground of its inconsistency with the divine perfections; yet in matters

of acknowledged *fact*, they are inadmissible. If God *hath done* thus and thus, it is not for us to object that it is inconsistent with his character; but to suspect our own understanding, and to conclude that if we knew the whole, we should see it to be right.—Paul invariably takes it for granted that *whatever God doth is right:* nor will he dispute with any man on a contrary principle, but cuts him short in this manner: "Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid!" It was enough for him that God had said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." This, as if he should say, is the *fact:* "He *hath* mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he *hardeneth.*" He knew what would be the heart-risings of the infidel—"Thou wilt say unto me, Why doth he yet find fault; for who hath resisted his will?" But does he attempt to answer this objection? No; he repels it as Job did: "He that reproveth God, let him answer it."—"Nay but, O man, who art thou that *repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?*" Rom. ix. 14—20.

Let the querist consider whether his objections be not of the same family as those which were made to the apostle, and whether they do not admit of the same answer. Is it not *fact*, that though sinners "never had a disposition to love and serve God, and no circumstances in which they can be placed will produce it;" yet *they are accountable creatures, and as such are invariably treated in the scriptures?* God requires them to love and serve him just as much as if they were of opposite dispositions, and "finds fault" with the contrary. Instead of allowing for the want of disposition, he constantly charges it as the very thing that provokes his displeasure. Hundreds of proofs might be produced; but I will only refer you to two or three, viz. Jer. vi. 15—19. Matt. xii. 34—37. John viii. 43—47. It is upon these *facts* that we rest our persuasion; and not upon a supposed perfect comprehension of the divine government, nor yet upon the ground of its "having the fewest difficulties." We say, God *actually* treats the want of disposition not as an excuse, but as a sin; and we take it for granted that *what God does is right*, whether we can comprehend it or not. Howbeit in this case it happens, that with the testimonies of God accord those of conscience and common sense.

Every man's conscience "finds fault" with him for the evils which he commits willingly, or of choice; and instead of making any allowance for previous aversion, nothing more is necessary to rivet the charge. And with respect to the common sense of mankind in their treatment one of another, what judge, or what jury, ever took into consideration the previous aversion of a traitor or a murderer with a view to the diminishing of his guilt? On the contrary, the tracing of any thing to that origin, rivets the charge, and terminates the inquiry. With the united testimony therefore of God, conscience, and common sense on our side, we make light of objections, which, as to their principle, were repelled by an apostle, and which are retained only in the school of metaphysical infidelity. *Andrew Fuller.*

FOR THE WITNESS.

CRITICAL DISQUISITION ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

"——— The fiery gulph,
"That flaming bound of wrath omnipotent!
"It thunders;—but it thunders to preserve;
"It strengthens what it strikes, its wholesome dread
"Averts the dreaded pain; its hideous groans
"Join heaven's sweet hallelujahs in thy praise,
"Great Source of good alone! how kind in all!
"In vengeance kind! pain, death, *Gehenna*, SAVE."

YOUNG.

At a period when infidelity in the guise of rational religion is palming new absurdities on the world for scriptural truth; when freedom of inquiry, liberality of sentiment, and other phrases characteristic of urbanity and intellect are hackneyed into use, to betray the minds of the unwary, and to deceive if possible the very elect, it becomes the duty of every Christian, especially to insist on the necessity of having correct views of the character of Jehovah Aleim, and, as connected with it, of the future and eternal condition of man.

To obtain these, we need other light than has been reflected from nature by ancient and modern philosophy: divine revelation only can give us clear and comprehensive

views of the character of the Divinity, can exhibit to us the relations subsisting between him and created intelligences, or open on a benighted world the prospect of woe or bliss inconceivable in kind, and coeval with himself in duration. Bewildered in the labyrinth of atheism, some have even lost sight of the distinction between virtue and vice, and, by consequence, of retributive justice; while others, erecting an altar to the unknown God, have felt much self-complacency on discovering *in nature* that man *may* live again, because a worm is transformed into a butterfly. One fool saith in his heart, There *is* no God; another rejects the absurdity, but worships he knows not what; each being alike ignorant of his obnoxiousness to that awful decision which will proceed from the great white throne of the final, omniscient, and almighty Judge.

Nor is revelation at all more honoured by the profession of those who misconstrue the record which God hath given of his Son. Some there are who blasphemously compare Jesus the Eternal Word to Socrates the heathen, and from a misinterpretation of the fifteenth of first Corinthians, fancy, that, at the termination of probationary existence, the immortal soul of man with his body is committed a material deposite to the grave. That such was not the faith of the martyr Stephen is manifest from his dying petition; nor does Paul, who was no stranger to this testimony, gainsay it, when longing to be with Christ, which is far better. "Have ye not read in the book of Moses," said He who is the resurrection and the life, to such as believed there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit, "how God spake to him in the bush, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Therefore ye greatly err." Others divest the Redeemer of his glories in a different way: they invoke the saints whom they have canonized, and whom they suppose to hold, in some sort, the destinies of purgatorial regions, for their intercession in behalf of the living, and to procure, if possible, for certain departed spirits, a shorter passage from their dismal situation to the haven of complete rest: in this manner undermining the authority of him who hath declared, "I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory I will not give to another." But neither the Materialist, nor the Romist, in entertaining

such dishonourable notions of the infinite atonement, has run into greater absurdities respecting a future state, than the *liberal* sectarian who dwells on the topic of divine love at the expense of that inflexible justice, which is also one of the attributes of God, and which, the Bible assures us, will appoint some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt.

That God hath appointed a day, however, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, is a truth disputed by none, perhaps, who says he believes the Bible, how deeply soever he may have been led, through irreverence of him to whom vengeance belongeth, to indulge in extravagant, speculative inquiries about the nature, period of commencement, duration, subjects and design of the wrath to be revealed. It is my intention to consider some of the passages in the Old and New Testaments, which relate to a future retribution, in order to illustrate them, in some measure, for the advantage of those who have not leisure or opportunity to read considerably themselves: and, in so doing, that my papers may not take up too much room, nor my obscurity accumulate too many honours, it will be necessary to state a determination to avail myself freely of the knowledge or sentiments of any author that has met, or may yet meet my attention, without being always careful to give his name or reference, or even to apologize any further for such omission.

To make a few observations on some terms in relation with the subject, will be necessary to the prosecution of it. The word *hell*, though now understood to signify the place of torment prepared for the wicked after doomsday, originally meant, it would seem, any *unseen* or *concealed* place; being derived from the Saxon word *hillan* or *helan*, *to hide*; or from *holl*, *a cavern*. At this day, in various parts of England, it is common enough to use the word *hele* or *hill*, instead of *cover*; as, for example, when a mother bids the nurse *hele* the child warm a-bed. In king Henry VIII's great Bible, or in the Psalter used in the English church, where the old English translation is retained, it is clearly seen that it was not formerly confined to mean the place to which the wicked shall finally be consigned. "They lie in the hell like sheep." Psal. xlix. 14. Nor did it denote the grave, properly so called, "Let them go down quick into hell."

Psal. lv. 16. that is, let them be swallowed up alive by the earth, like Korah, Dathan and Abiram. The fitness of the comparison of men who are rich, proud, and without understanding, to the beasts that perish, in the former of these passages, does not appear under the present acceptation of the term; for whatever lying in the hell may mean, it is certain that should it be supposed to intend lying in the place prepared for the devil and his angels, the likeness to sheep in this respect could not be discerned. But if the primitive signification of the term be applied, and the passage compared with the context, the meaning will be better understood. Nor is it difficult to conceive how the general sense of hell, namely *invisibility*, came first to mean, *the mansions* or *common receptacle of the dead*, and then, *the place of everlasting punishment*. It is written in the scriptures, and quoted and commented on by the great Lowth; "Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds." Judges vi. 2. To these they betook themselves for refuge in times of distress and hostile invasion; "When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits." 1 Sam. xiii. 6. and see Jer. xli. 9. Therefore to enter into the rock, to go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, was to them a very proper and familiar image to express terror and consternation. The prophet Hosea hath carried the same image further, and added strength and spirit to it, chap. x. 8. "They shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us." compare Rev. vi. 15, 16.

May not the word *hell*, and the German *holle*, (whence *hole* and *hollow* I presume) used by Luther in his translation to convey the same different meanings, have obtained their additional uses by such a process as these texts and remarks naturally suggest to us? A celebrated lexicographer says, that the English words *burrow* and *bury* are derivatives of the Hebrew *bor*, a pit, dungeon, grave, or the like; if so, it may throw additional light on our subject to consult the following scriptures: Exod. xii. 29. Psal. vii. 15. Jer. xxxviii. 6. and to compare Zech. ix. 11. with Heb. xiii. 20.

Sheol, translated hell or grave, is said properly to signify 'the invisible state of the dead,' or 'the place and state of those who are out of the way, and to be sought for.' A great critic remarks, that Jacob, Gen. xxxvii. 35. would go down mourning into *sheol* to his son; not into *hell* (the place of the damned) for he never thought his son to be gone thither, nor into *the grave properly so named*, for he thought his son had been devoured by a wild beast; but into *the receptacle of the dead*. The word occurs, Gen. xlii. 38. xliv. 31. 1 Kings ii. 9. Numb. xvi. 30, 33. Job xvii. 13, 19. Psal. xlix. 15. lxxxix. 46. cxli. 7. Isa. xiv. 9, 11. &c.

The Greek word *hades*, by the poets spelt *haïdes*, is formed of the negation *a*, and the verb *idein* to see; obscure, dark, invisible. It is obviously a very fit term for rendering the sense of *sheol:* accordingly, the Seventy, in translating the Old Testament, have almost always used *hades*. In the New Testament it occurs eleven times. Our English word *hell*, in its primitive signification, perfectly corresponded with *hades;* but in the sense in which it is now used, it is calculated to mislead, and ought, in the judgment of some of the learned, never to be used to render the English of that term. "Who, for example, (says one) would render the words of the venerable patriarch Jacob, Gen. xxxvii. 35. when he was deceived by his sons into the opinion that his favourite child, Joseph, had been devoured by a wild beast, *I will go down to hell to my son mourning?* Or the words which he used, chap. xlii. 38. when they expostulated with him about sending his youngest, Benjamin, into Egypt along with them, *Ye will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to hell?* Yet in both these places, the word in the original is *sheol*, and in the version of the Seventy, *hades*." The same author retains the word *hades* in his English translation, to express the state of departed spirits before the day of judgment, and uses the word *hell* to answer *gehenna*, a term which occurs just twelve times in the New Testament, and to which we shall presently attend. *Hades* has these too significations: *the invisible receptacle* or *mansion of the dead* in general, as in Matt. xi. 23. Luke x. 15. (compare Isa. xiv. 12, 15.) 1 Cor. xv. 55. Acts ii. 27, 30. which last passage is cited from Psal. xvi. 10. where the Hebrew words corresponding to *soul* and *hell*, signify the *body* or *animal frame*, and *the place or state of those who are out of the way, and to be sought for.*

It is to be observed, that were this passage translated literally from the Greek, the phrase *in hell* or *in the grave* would be *in of hell* or *in of the grave*, which, in order to render the sense complete, would have to be supplied with *the house* or *the place*: hence, the other sense of *hades*, namely, *the invisible place* or *state of separate souls*, *the unseen world of separate spirits*; of torment, Luke xvi. 23. or in general, Rev. i. 18. vi. 8. xx. 13, 14.

The Greek word *abyssos*, formed of *a* intens. and *byssos*, *the deep*, which profane writers have used as an adjective, signifying *very* or *exceedingly deep* or *unfathomable*, is employed in scripture to denote *the common receptacle of the dead*, as in Rom. x. 7. compare Matt. xii. 40. Eph. iv. 9. and sometimes the place of *outer darkness*, as in Luke viii. 31. compare Rev. ix. 1, 2. xx. 1, 3.

It was believed by the Greeks, that *Tartarus*, (derived from the Hebrew, *a ring*, *circle*, or the like) the name by which they called *hell*, was situated in caverns below the Atlantic ocean, which they hence termed *mare tenebrarum*, that is, the sea of darkness, 'the idea originating, (observes a certain writer) very naturally, from the circumstance of the sun's setting there in respect to them.' They thought that there was the same distance between the earth and heaven, as between the earth and Tartarus; and it was probably with a view to the common opinion of the heathens of those times, that the apostle Peter, who in his first epistle reminds the Christians, that before their conversion they were given to "abominable idolatries;" in warning them of false teachers, instances the fate of the sinning angels, whom God had cast down to Tartarus, or the prison of *hades*, to be reserved there until the day of judgment, after which they would be cast into a *gehenna* of fire. This notion of the ancient heathen respecting the situation of Tartarus, and their making it the place where the giants who rebelled against Jupiter, and the souls of the wicked, are confined, induce the belief that the Greeks had received by tradition, either an account of the fallen angels, or of the Rephaim or giants whom God swept away in his wrath by a deluge of waters. Compare Job xxvi. 5, 6, and read, The Rephaim are under the waters, &c. It is here worth our notice, too, that the Hebrew for *an abyss of waters*, the Seventy commonly translate *abyssos*.

(To be continued.)

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

THE detail of a particular case of discipline, and the most minute directions as to the steps to be employed before final decision, are contained in the grand law, Matt. xviii. 17. The last in the series is the exclusion of the offender by *this church*. Now, if there was any appeal from this sentence, if it could be reviewed and reversed by a higher court, is it not unaccountable that our Lord should not at the same time inform us of it? But our argument against courts of review on church discipline is not drawn merely from the silence of this passage. We not only maintain that no mention is here made of them, but that they are virtually and effectually excluded. In this passage, our Lord not only does not direct to them, but he says what implies that they are no where else instituted, by committing the power of excommunication to this church, whatever it may be. I will contend that this is more than silence. This church is supposed to exercise the highest authority, without having its proceedings subject to any review upon earth; with this engagement of the King of Zion, that whatever they bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever they loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Every decision agreeable to the revealed will of Jesus, every instance of the application of his laws, and as to the execution of discipline, according to the apostolical instructions, shall be ratified in heaven by the Head of the church. Is it not here said, that this church has power to bind, and that it also has power to loose? This must certainly include not merely the clearing of the offending brother by the church, who was found guilty by the brethren who conversed with him, but also more especially the restoration of the offender after repentance. Whatever is loosed must have previously been bound. This offender must have been proved previously guilty of the offence, and now upon repentance is acquitted. This must extend not only to repentance before the church excludes him, but also to repentance after he hath been cut off. The same body that is here said to bind, is also said to loose. If this church has power to exclude unworthy members, it is also natural that it should have the power of re-admitting them, upon sufficient evidence of their repentance. It is not said that this

church had power to bind, and that if they bound partially or erroneously, a higher court could loose; but the binding and the loosing are ascribed to the same body.

But our Lord cuts off any possibility of their decision being reversed by a superior court, by his positive promise to ratify the sentence. Now if their sentence, as soon as it is passed, is confirmed in heaven, how absurd would it be to suppose that that sentence could be reviewed and reversed upon earth by men! Nay, so positively does our Lord affirm his ratification of their sentence, that he does not even expressly except the case of an unjust determination. This, indeed, is necessarily implied; but to have made such an express exception here, would have insinuated that there might be true churches which should be composed of members who might be inadequate or partial judges, neither of which should be supposed; for if they are either, they are not a church of Christ at all. As the plainest understanding is capable of judging between brethren as to offences, and as a church ought to be composed of spiritual men alone, Jesus does not provide for instances in which, from partiality, they will favour any party. This may be the case in a body called a church; but whenever it is so, they forfeit every title to the character of a church of Christ. The only redress which the injured could receive from them, must be by their repentance. If this does not appear, he is commanded no longer to consider them as a church, but to turn away from them.

Our Lord does not affront his churches by enacting regulations which imply, that either out of ignorance or partiality, they will pervert his laws. Now I demand, if the sentence of this *church* is ratified by Jesus, who has a right to review or reverse it? We argue then, that not only such courts are not mentioned, though there is every reason to suppose that they should be, had they been instituted, but that the possibility of their existence is here necessarily excluded. This church, whatever it is, has the power of excommunication, of binding and loosing, with the promise of ratification to their sentence by the Head of the church. Besides, we shall afterwards shew, that courts of review are not only not mentioned here, but that they are mentioned, or exemplified in no other passage of scripture. Even allowing Acts xv. to establish courts of reference, it by no means

could be strained to justify courts of review. There is a mighty difference between settling a disputed matter, and reversing a sentence already passed into execution.

Carson's Reply to Brown on Discipline.

INTERESTING FRAGMENTS.

Hope will be cheerful under great trials; and, smiling, say, 'Better days may come.' Faith will reply, 'Come they will, at the destined hour.' But it is the delight of love to make present days better, and to derive advantage from the past. Love is the mistress of faith and hope, the life and soul of all the graces. *Blundel.*

Observe all false religions; they take man as he is; they accommodate themselves to his errors and his passions; they leave him essentially the same; they follow the man; they are formed after his likeness: whereas here the man changes; he is modelled after the image of religion. The gospel, instead of flattering, tells him that nothing is to be done while he remains as he now is; that in his present state he is incapable of performing its duties, and of relishing its joys; that he must be transformed, or he "cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And what it indispensably requires, it provides for and secures; hence all is order and harmony. For every thing in the sublime dispensation of the gospel, and the constitution of the Christian church, is new: we have "a new covenant;" we have a "new Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all;" we approach God by a "new and living way;" we sing "a new song;" we are called by "a new name;" "according to his promise, we look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" "He that sitteth on the throne, saith, Behold, I create all things new." *Jay.*

Many ministers do not appear to encourage experimental religion, or preach upon it clearly or much, if at any time. And though they would be thought to be Calvinists, they appear to dislike, and never preach some of the most important doctrines of Calvinism; such as, the total depravity of man; God's first moving and sovereign grace, in the regeneration and conversion of sinners; and the doctrine

of the decrees of God, taken in the only proper, strict and extensive sense, that he has decreed whatsoever comes to pass. They ignorantly say, It would be better to say, God *foreknew* whatsoever comes to pass. They choose to call themselves moderate Calvinists; but might as well, and perhaps more properly be called moderate Arminians. *Hopkins.*

There are some who will tell you that they hold to election. But if you ask them how they hold it, you will be answered, that we are elected when we believe, and not before. But how can it be said that we are "called according to God's purpose," if no purpose respecting our salvation existed until we believed? If our being chosen is an effect of our believing, or in consequence of it, then it will unavoidably follow that God's choice is dependent on ours: for in believing, the soul actually chooses God for its portion and everlasting all. This sentiment makes our believing the cause of God's choosing us; while the sentiment I advocate makes God's choice the cause of our believing. The former, while it soothes and flatters the pride of the sinner, deceives him, by leading him to believe that he can choose what his heart is totally opposed to; the latter, although it abases the creature in the dust, exalts the character of God, who by his sovereign grace saves the sinner, who would never do any thing, if let alone, to save himself. If, to evade the force of this reasoning, it should be said, that sinners are not converted by their own unassisted exertions, but by the influence of the Spirit of God, it will be admitted; but this does not obviate the difficulty. For one of two things will necessarily follow; either that God operates in a greater degree upon them that believe, than upon others, or that they had some previous good dispositions, which the others did not possess. Let the opposers of the doctrine of sovereign grace choose which side of the dilemma they please. *Baldwin.*

GLEANINGS

FROM REV. JOHN NEWTON'S FAMILIAR CONVERSATIONS.

Speaking of the importance of motives, he would say, 'If I wanted a man to fly, I must contrive to find him

wings; and thus if I would successfully enforce moral *duties*, I must advance evangelical *motives*.'

If an angel were sent to find the most perfect man, he would probably not find him composing a body of divinity; but perhaps a cripple in a poor-house, whom the parish wish dead; but humbled before God, with far lower thoughts of himself than others think of him.

In divinity, as well as in the other professions, there are the *little* artists. A man may be able to execute the buttons of a statue very neatly; but I could not call him an able artist. There is an air, there is a taste, to which his narrow capacity cannot reach.—Now, in the church, there are your dexterous *button-makers*.

I would not give a straw for that assurance which sin will not damp. If David had come from his adultery, and had talked of his assurance at that time, I should have despised his speech.

There is the analogy of faith: it is a master-key, which not only opens particular doors, but carries you through the whole house; but an attachment to a rigid system is dangerous. Luther once turned out the epistle of St. James, because it disturbed his system. Dr. Owen will be ashamed of his wisdom and clearness five minutes after he has been in heaven. I shall preach, perhaps, very usefully upon two opposite texts, while kept apart; but if I attempt nicely to reconcile them, it is ten to one if I don't begin to bungle.

Contrivers of systems on the earth, are like contrivers of systems in the heavens; where the sun and moon keep the same course, in spite of the philosophers.

The Lord has reasons far beyond our ken, for opening a wide door, while he stops the mouth of a useful preacher. John Bunyan would not have done half the good he did, if he had remained preaching in Bedford, instead of being shut up in Bedford prison.

Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, said to me, 'Sir, I have collated every word in the Hebrew scriptures seventeen times; and it is very strange if the doctrine of atonement you hold should not have been found by me.'—I am not surprised at this: I once went to light my candle with the extinguisher on it. Now, prejudices from education, learning, &c. often form an extinguisher. It is not enough that you bring the candle; you must remove the extinguisher.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

By the Supplement to the London Evangelical Magazine, for 1808, it appears that in two Baptist Associations in South Wales, 1051 have been baptized, and added to the churches in their connexion, in one year.

A brief Narrative of the Baptist Mission in India has been lately published in London, said to be drawn up by Mr. Fuller. In a short review of this work in the London Evangelical Magazine, this mission is spoken of as being "as disinterested in design, and as strenuous in exertion, as any that the Christian world ever did or ever can employ for the illumination and conversion of idolaters; and surpassing beyond all comparison, all former missions, and all other undertakings, in the grand article of translating the Bible into the languages of the heathen. We may fairly doubt whether there ever was an undertaking of the same magnitude and continuance, and in which so many persons were concerned, that supplied by its conduct so little to gratify the malice of its bitterest enemies. The number of persons baptized by the missionaries down to November, 1807, is 123; nearly 100 of whom were natives, chiefly Hindoos, with a few Mahometans. Nine were of the Brahmin cast."

We hear from Swanzey, (Mass.) that a powerful work of the Lord is going on in that place. About seventy have been baptized on a profession of faith and added to the church during the past winter. Some interesting particulars respecting this work are promised us for a future number.

REMARKS ADAPTED TO MR. NORTON'S REPLY.

We had just handed to the printer our remarks upon Mr. Norton's "reply," (see No. III. p. 138) when we received from our friends in Liverpool, the Eclectic Review for January, 1809. From that celebrated work, we present our readers with a short extract from an able review of Dr. Paley's sermons, as being more valuable than our own remarks.

"To avoid admitting the appointment of a Redeemer as an *entirely* new economy of the moral relations of men with their Almighty Governor, in regard to the terms of their acceptance, Dr. Paley briefly proposes a theory, which makes the death of Christ the cause, and virtue, holiness, or 'a good life,' the condition, of salvation." He says, 'We must bear in mind that in the business of salvation there are naturally and properly two things, viz. the cause, and the condition; and that these two things are different. We should see better the propriety of this distinction, if we would allow ourselves to consider well *what salvation is*: what the being saved means. It is nothing less than, after this life is ended, being placed in a state of happiness exceedingly great, both in degree and duration, &c.'

"After displaying the magnificence of this prospect, he proceeds to show, that virtue cannot merit this salvation, and that we are to ascribe 'this inconceivably advantageous offer of salvation to the voluntary bounty of Almighty God. But a most kind offer may still be a conditional offer. And this, though an infinitely gracious and beneficial offer, is still a conditional offer, and the performance of the conditions is as necessary, as if it had been an offer of mere retribution.

'Some who allow the necessity of good works to salvation, are not willing that they should be called conditions of salvation. But this, I think, is a distinction too refined for common Christian apprehension. If they be necessary to salvation, they are conditions of salvation, so far as I can see. A man will not obtain what is offered unless he comply with the terms; so far his compliance is a condition of his happiness.'

"The doctor himself is fully aware that this view of the subject, notwithstanding every precaution in the statement, every admonition of unworthiness, every representation of the magnitude of the promised felicity, and every eulogium of the generosity of the divine Benefactor, will yet have a strong tendency, as the human mind is constituted, to cherish notions of high desert after all. He has taken pains, and made a very plausible representation of a parallel case, to prevent this obvious consequence. But we think it would so infallibly result, as to destroy that estimate of the Christian economy as a system of pure absolute mercy, which is

so often expressed in the New Testament, and to preclude that feeling of boundless obligation which animated the gratitude and devotion of the apostles.

"In the way of shewing the incorrectness of the theory, it will be enough just to notice the very imperfect conception and definition of salvation with which it sets out. If any one thing be evident in the New Testament, it would seem to be, that salvation, as there described, does not consist solely in a final preservation from punishment and attainment of the heavenly felicity, but includes essentially that sanctified state of the mind and character, which forms a preparation for that final happiness. This purified state, we apprehend, is represented not as a mere antecedent circumstance of salvation, but as a part of its very essence. But it would be strangely incorrect to call that a *condition* of salvation, which is an essential part of it.

"Again, the Christian scriptures state, we should think, with the utmost distinctness, that the sanctity of mind which is the operating principle in all practical Christian virtue, and but for which not one act of true Christian virtue would ever be performed, is just as much a free gift of the divine mercy, and just as impossible to have been otherwise obtained, as that final felicity which is the completion of salvation; but it would be strange to call that a condition, of which the substance is to be effected by the very Being who prescribes it."

Mr. Norton does not admit that "God loves his people while enemies to him." It is presumed, however, that the following passages of holy writ fully establish the fact. Eph. ii. 4, 5. Rom. v. 10. Jesus himself declares, "I lay down my life for my sheep;" he also prays for all those who should believe on him through the preaching of his disciples, and says, I pray not for the world, &c. Although the atonement of Christ is infinite, yet it is not believed to be the divine purpose to make the application of its saving benefits universal. There was a special determination in this particular as it respects the spiritual seed of the Redeemer. Eph. i. 4, 5. They being from eternity chosen in him as their Head and Representative, they are beloved by the Father for his sake. Thus it appears, to us at least, that God exercises a love to his elect which he does not exercise towards the non-elect.

REMARKS

On Dr. Eckley's Sermon, from Heb. xii. 17. *"They watch for your souls;" and on the other Services at the Ordination of Rev. Horace Holley, March* 8, 1809. 53 pp. 8vo.

Those who feel interested in the prosperity of Zion, will seize every opportunity of ascertaining the religious sentiments of the churches. To them it will appear of the first importance, that the doctrines and ordinances which are taught be of apostolic rule and authority. Otherwise it is of little consequence how numerous and respectable the congregations may be, or how great the external peace of the churches.

By the usual practice of publishing the varied services of an ordination, an opportunity is furnished to obtain an extensive knowledge of the state of religion: for it must be understood, that those who engage in these solemn transactions are in harmonious agreement respecting the character, work and ordinances of Him whose professed servants they are. Were it not so, it could never be known what sentiments prevail, and whether men suspected of preaching *another gospel* might not be associated with those who preach Christ crucified, unto them which are called, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Availing ourselves of these sources of information, we feel in some sense pledged to our readers to communicate what we obtain, as the result of a careful and faithful examination.

Although the sermon before us possesses many beauties, and is liable to a few exceptions only; yet we deem it candid and friendly, as well as useful, to point out the blemishes with freedom and impartiality.

After an impressive introduction, the author proceeds in the first place to make some remarks respecting the human soul, which he proves to be *intellectual*, by its capacity to *think*; and *moral*, by the scriptures which represent its fallen state.

Under the second head, "On the duty of watching for souls," it is well observed, that he who watches for souls "must be previously acquainted with their condition, convinced of their value, animated with the desire of their interest; and furnished with such a degree of theological knowledge as may enable him to impart its treasure to others."

In considering in the third place the motives to enforce the duty of watching for souls, it is stated, "First, clergymen selected from the class of their fellow mortals are the *only* agents appointed for the purpose." If the author had said that clergymen are the only agents appointed by *human authority* to watch for souls, we should not undertake to deny the fact. But it appears by the connexion, that he intends to be understood that God has given that charge exclusively to clergymen. To this we object, first, because we find no ground for such a conclusion in the New Testament; and secondly, because it is expressly required of all the brethren that they watch over and exhort one another daily. Surely the primitive Christians did not think themselves unqualified to watch for souls, nor excused from the duty. In Acts viii. 1—4, we are told that the whole church, except the apostles, were scattered abroad, and went every where, preaching the word. Paul testifies of the Romans that they were filled with all knowledge, and able to admonish one another. He warmly commends the Thessalonians for sounding out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place, so that the apostles had no need to speak any thing. The apostle James, in addressing the *brethren*, says, Let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death. Priscilla and Aquila, Philip the deacon, and others, seemed to understand their duties and privileges in teaching, admonishing, expounding, &c. none forbidding them. Perhaps there is no passage of scripture which more strongly inculcates on the saints the constant exercise of every gift and grace, than Eph. vi. 10, and onward. There they are exhorted to take the whole armour of God, that they may wrestle successfully against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places; having their loins girt about with truth, and their feet shod with the *preparation of the gospel of peace.* These passages, and numerous others, abundantly shew that *clergymen* are not the *only* agents concerned in the propagation of truth and edification of the church; or in other words, in watching for souls.

We do not wish to multiply objections, but we are constrained to ask how it appears from scripture testimony respecting the covenant of redemption, that any of the souls

given to Christ, "might have perished without recovery" through the neglect of a clergyman? We cannot conceive of any such contingency; neither do we recollect any part of God's word which describes "the indignity of those who will be lost through ministerial neglect." Although the errors of a modern Hymeneus or a Philetus do eat as doth a canker, and overthrow the faith of some; "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth *sure*, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." "And this is the Father's will (saith Jesus) that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Blessed be God for these testimonies to the safety of his people, notwithstanding the mistakes or *neglect* of those who consider themselves the *only* agents appointed to take charge of them.

Under the last head, "on the obligations of the *people* attendant on this ministry," it is justly remarked, that "The apostles possessed powers which are not communicated to succeeding ministers." But the use which is made of that fact would lead us to suspect a deficiency in the sacred scriptures, respecting church government; for the Doctor declines giving his opinion "of the authority of Christian pastors;" and as a substitute for apostolic powers, he refers the people "to the platform of the congregational churches, for whatever is necessary to be observed on this subject!" "The rules," he says, "are plain, and appear to me in general to be taken from the gospel itself." A high recommendation indeed! What, appear *in general* to be taken from the *gospel itself?* Surely this is good reason why it is recommended so particularly to the people, rather than the "gospel itself:" for the gospel, it seems, is deficient in transmitting the powers which are deemed necessary through any regular succession; but the platform has made ample provision in this department by giving Christian pastors a paramount authority in the churches, as our readers will see by consulting the platform itself, chap. x. sec. 11. "In New England, (continues the Doctor) especially in the capital cities, the clergy and laity know not of any disagreement in these matters." Is Dr. E. a stranger to the sharp controversy which is maintained in his own denomination on this subject? We think he found ere the services in which he was engaged were closed, that among the "clergy," if not among the "laity," there existed some "disagreement in

these matters." We will conclude our remarks on this particular by the following apposite quotation from the celebrated Dr. Jortin. "A theological system is too often no more than a temple consecrated to implicit faith; and he who enters in there to worship, instead of leaving the shoes, after the eastern manner, must leave his understanding at the door; and it will be well if he find it when he comes out again."

The following sentiments in the sermon, page 25, are worthy the pen of the Christian minister, and the attentive perusal of the merely rational Christian. "Surely it cannot be doubted, that it readily arises out of the natural taste of the sinner to wish that the sanctions of holy writ were relaxed, and the expectation of heaven dependent on a course of *external morality*, rather than on that *radical change of heart*, described by our Saviour to Nicodemus, producing crucifixion to the world in a spiritual sense, and of which *external morality*, important as it is, may be considered to be nothing more than the sign and effect. We read of many of the Jews, who were so bold as to "say to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things; prophesy deceits; get you out of the way; turn aside out of the path; cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." The world is not essentially regenerated at the present time. There is, indeed, too much *wisdom*, to allow any part of a religious assembly to address a Christian minister in the language used by the Jews. There may still exist a real though dormant inclination to receive the gospel after the rudiments of this world—with the enticing words of man's wisdom—or, as the apostle to the Gentiles says, *another gospel* than he had learned, in preference to that which is given from heaven, asserting that without holiness it is impossible to see God, and coming in demonstration of the spirit and of power."

The address "to the assembly at large" is in our opinion a poor application of the doctrines stated in the preceding quotation. It does not appear well calculated to *alarm* the sinner who may be resting his hopes of heaven "on a course of *external morality*;" and to convince him that "without a radical change of heart," without "the spirit and power" of the gospel, "it is impossible to see God." "Receive the religion (says the address,) of the Son of

God, in gratitude and love, and you will live forever. Like some celestial guest, it will be an improving companion in the uneven paths of human life, and the sweetest solace in the season of death." The Doctor will excuse us if we call this a poor imitation of the language of our Saviour to Nicodemus, or of John in the subsequent part of the chapter. If the natural man be left to put his own construction upon the term "religion," and the manner in which he is to "receive" it, he will most certainly depend on that external morality which may justly "be considered to be nothing more than the sign and effect" of true religion.

The Charge, by Dr. Lathrop, contains the usual appropriate passages of scripture, and several judicious remarks. The following is one of them. "While we are far from claiming the authority of the apostles, we do, *in some sense*, act as the ambassadors of Christ." On this point we consider the Doctor and many of his brethren at issue; for we frequently, if not generally, find young "gentlemen" just from the schools, as well as others, assuming the title of ambassadors of Christ, not merely "*in some sense*," but in an *unqualified* sense.

To the sentiment in the following passage we have some objections. "Those doctrines which are confessedly mysterious, you will view with religious reverence, and if called at any time to discourse on them, you will give your opinion with diffidence, and in the exercise of great candour towards such of your brethren as may have given opinions different from yours on the same subject."

The Bible, which contains the doctrine of Christ, declares also its *simplicity*. Jesus says, "If *any* man will do his will, he shall *know* of the doctrine whether it be of God." It is true, Paul says, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh;" but he does not say, great is the mystery of doctrine. If the Corinthians had not *known* these doctrines, Paul could not have addressed them as follows: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the *doctrine which ye have learned*; and avoid them." We cannot, therefore, agree with the author, that the minister should give his opinion with *diffidence* on essential doctrines. The character and atonement of Christ, the sinner's guilty and condemned state, his recovery through the sovereign new-creating power of the Holy Ghost, and the necessity of the

saints' perseverance in holy obedience, are doctrines too clearly revealed to admit of dispute or hesitation. This is the mystery, which Paul says was hid from ages and generations, but is *now* made manifest to the saints, and which he sums up in a few words, "Christ IN you, the hope of glory."

The following beautiful and just observations we cannot withhold from our readers. Page 44. "A wise man, therefore, will not say, that he never *will* alter any of his religious opinions. If he has any *mind*, if he allows himself to think at all, he *must* and he *will* alter his opinions, when the providence of God, over which he has no control, puts him in a situation to see things in a light different from what he before saw them.—Vain then will be all attempts to establish perfect uniformity of opinion among Christians, or to bind the human mind by the devices which have been formed for that purpose. Men may say what they *now* believe, but no man in his senses will promise, that he will *always* believe exactly the same things.—No man, therefore, who has any knowledge of the human heart, or any regard for the right of private judgment, will attempt to deprive his brother of that freedom, which God hath given him; or to fetter his mind with oaths and subscriptions."

We cannot say that we are of the Doctor's opinion in regard to the "peace," "rest," &c. which the churches now enjoy. "What would our pious ancestors have given (he asks) for the peace which we enjoy?" It is too well known what they *would* have given, by the specimens which they *did* give. Of the few in that day who ventured to dissent from them, they *did* give—some to the prison, some to the whipping-post, some to the savages, and some to the halter, that they might *exclusively* enjoy that "peace and liberty" for which "they left their native land, and fled to this wilderness."

It is with surprise that we observe from the pen of so liberal, and so well read a gentleman as Dr. L. the following declaration respecting these men. "All who love their memory will cherish the principles of evangelical *freedom*, which they purchased with toils and sufferings." Rather should he have said, with the historian who wrote the life of our immortal Washington, in speaking of these identical ancestors, "Just escaped from persecution, they demonstra-

ted that it was not the *principle*, but its *application*, which they condemned, and *became persecutors themselves.*"

Is it not manifestly improper and unjust to disguise the sentiments and practices of men whom we hold up as patterns? Not to dispute the propriety of bringing forward our ancestors, or any other human authorities, so frequently as it is become the fashion to do on almost every public occasion, would it not be best to let those whom we recommend as examples speak for themselves? Posterity will lose nothing by knowing the truth respecting their ancestors; but they may suffer much by the deceptions which are practised upon them. Our's were distinguished indeed by rare virtues, and by none more than those which seem to be overlooked by their modern eulogists.

Of the Right Hand of Fellowship, by Dr. Kirkland, we have but little to say. Its merits are certainly rare in this age of polemics; for we have not discovered in it one sentence against the truth. Like his brethren who preceded him he boasts a little of the harmony of the churches and their pastors in the metropolis and its vicinity. His reasons for it, we think, are clear and conclusive. "It has been the natural consequence of their gradual adoption of those *peaceful* maxims in regard to Christian communion, which are believed to allow the requisite scope to zeal for purity of faith and practice, and to the exercise of private judgment and liberty of conscience; whilst at the same time they resist the causes of animosity, discord, and schism." We shall not undertake to determine what is meant by his *peaceful maxims.* Probably either an improvement upon the principles of evangelical freedom, "held by our ancestors," or a deviation from them is intended. This opinion is strengthened by the words "*gradual adoption.*" But still we are left to conjecture, whether the peaceful maxims mean a toleration of all sects in religion, or an accommodating policy in regard to the unpopular doctrines taught by the founders of these now peaceful churches. At any rate, the desired effect has been produced. "The *storms* which have been raised" by the "enthusiasts" of former times, who adopted less *peaceful maxims* than their successors, have "gradually" abated; and the "ministers in general" consider "this concord a blessing of great price." "It has lightened their labours;" for during these days when men seemed "to have drunk of the bitter waters of contention," it was

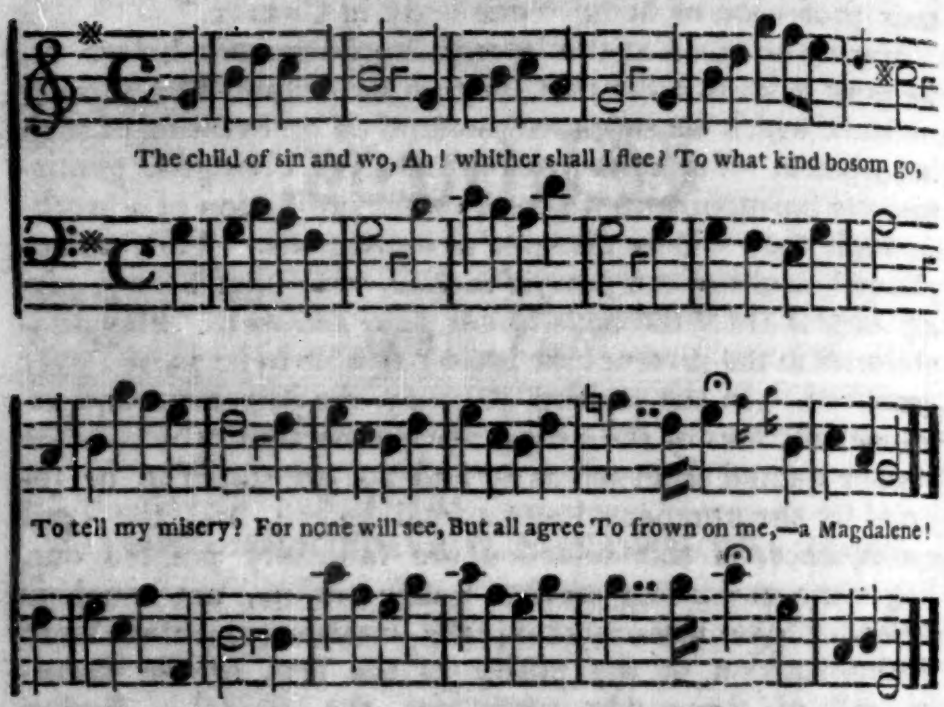
necessary for ministers to preach and labour day and night, to assist the people in "fixing their attention eagerly on points in which they might" *not* "differ," consistently with their profession of being "one body in CHRIST."

Having glanced at the several performances before us, we must acknowledge that they do not exhibit that *union of sentiment*, which we supposed essential on an occasion of such importance. For some reasons not yet divulged, gentlemen *can* harmonize as a *council* on the ordination of a brother, while they widely disagree as individuals. This, we apprehend, is one of the *peaceful maxims*, which has been *gradually adopted* since the days of our *pious ancestors*. The disagreement in the present case is too palpable to be passed over unnoticed. In the sermon, page 13, the important and essential doctrines of the gospel are enumerated, which, in the passage quoted from pages 25 and 26, are stated to be rejected by the unrenewed and carnal heart; and the fatal consequences of this rejection are faithfully pointed out. But in the succeeding services under review, not much is said to excite uneasiness in the unbeliever, either from a consideration of the purity of the law, or the dreadful end of those who obey not the gospel. And a less important, though more *pointed* difference is seen by comparing the passages quoted from the sermon, on the platform of the churches, with that quoted from the charge, pages 44 and 45. But having no design nor disposition to entangle ourselves in the present controversy on creeds and platforms, we shall only add, that while these human "guides" are so generally disregarded as at the present day, owing to the unprecedented attention which is excited to the *lively* oracles, we conceive them to be less injurious than the acrimonious spirit which is displayed in their defence.

We close by a quotation from a late London Magazine, on doctrinal preaching. "The greater part of those controversies which have torn and tortured the Christian church, have arisen from defining where the scriptures have not defined; and when men have dressed up their dogmas into articles of faith, they have condemned and persecuted their dissenting brethren for not subscribing to them. Thus have arisen most of the heresies of ancient and of modern times:—they have been raised by dogmatizing, and supported by opposition."

THE MAGDALENE.

The Words and Music by the Rev. Dr. Hawker.



My father!—ah! no more
His home or love I know:
He spurn'd me from his door,
And gave me up to wo!
He'll not relent,
Though penitent
My heart is bent,—a Magdalene!

The grave! the only end
To sorrow's heavy load!
Death is indeed a friend
To them at peace with God:
But grace must be
First giv'n and free:—
There's none for me, a Magdalene!

I've heard of Jesus' name,
Who on the gospel-day,
Received all that came,
Nor turn'd a wretch away!
Though all forbear,
Will Jesus hear,
In earnest pray'r, a Magdalene?

Methinks I feel a ray
Of hope arising round;
Some angel points the way;
Here's an asylum found!
What's this I see?
And can it be
Inviting me, a Magdalene?

And will you, can you take
A wretch like me within?
Will you, for Jesus' sake,
Help me to flee from sin?
Oh, love divine,
For grace to shine
On guilt like mine, a Magdalene!

Here, then, in this retreat
My soul shall wait and pray;
Nor rise from Jesus' feet
Till sin be put away!
Jesus will hear,
And answer prayer;
And say, Lo! here, a Magdalene!